

## Volunteer Policy

### **Introduction**

The Geographical Association (GA) is a registered charity whose principal aim is to further geographical knowledge and understanding through education. Volunteers and volunteering are at the heart of the GA's activities and many members give extremely generously of their time and energies. The GA remains in essence a volunteer organisation, just as it was when first founded in 1893.

It is the GA's aspiration that a volunteer's time, skills and experience will extend the organisation's capacity to pursue its principle aim. By doing so the expectation is that the organisation's relationship with its volunteers will form a mutually beneficial partnership, through which the volunteers will gain satisfaction for themselves.

Volunteers are individuals who work with the GA to support the organisation's charitable aim for no remuneration over and above reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, including travel and subsistence costs, in accordance with the GA's standard expense rates and allowances. They are normally members of the GA and are expected to help to promote the benefits of GA membership to others (e.g. through their own contacts).

### **The GA Volunteer Policy**

- Helps to foster a consistency of practice and greater clarity for the organisation as a whole.
- Encourages a wide range of members to take on volunteer roles for the GA, assist the GA in recruiting and welcoming new volunteers, as well as in celebrating the work of existing volunteers, and so improve volunteer retention. It thereby helps the activities of the GA to be representative of its membership.

### **GA Volunteer Roles**

All members are encouraged to become involved in a voluntary capacity. Examples of the main types of volunteer roles and activities include the following:

- governance of the organisation e.g. Trustee or Named Trustee, President, Honorary Treasurer, Publications Officer (these positions are elected or appointed in accordance with the GA's constitution)
- contributing to the GA's journals and *GA Magazine* either as author or reviewer
- contributing materials for the GA website
- getting involved in the GA's Phase Committees, Special Interest Groups, Working Groups and Communication Boards
- discussing, advising on and contributing to curriculum developments and national policy initiatives (this may be at the invitation of the GA)
- participating in the organisation and development of *Worldwise*, the GA's banner for student oriented activities
- special tasks e.g. assisting in the implementation of the GA's archives policy or membership
- promotion activities
- setting up and organising GA Branches
- participating in a placement as a work experience student at the GA head office.

## GA Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers are a key part of the GA and as such they are sought and recruited in accordance with the GA's Equal Opportunities Policy and should undertake their volunteer roles within the Law and in accordance with the GA's own policies and procedures. Volunteers are recruited through the following channels:

- membership literature inviting people to get involved (including GA e-newsletters)
- Annual Conference
- Branches
- *GA Magazine*
- GA website and e-newsletter
- Facebook and Twitter
- personal contacts and referrals

## GA Volunteer Assurances

- Volunteers will be supporting the GA to further geographical knowledge and understanding through education.
- Volunteer time, skills and experience will be used well, valued and recognised.
- Volunteers will be provided with opportunities to keep up to date with the GA's work and the GA will in turn seek volunteer views on its work.
- The GA is an organisation that seeks to be inclusive, non-discriminatory and diverse.
- Volunteers will not receive a contract from the GA nor any payment for any volunteer role that is undertaken.
- Volunteers will be reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, including travel and subsistence costs in accordance with the GA's standard expense rates and allowances.
- The GA will provide opportunities for volunteers' contributions to be formally recognised e.g. through the issuing of GA Certificates and other awards.
- The GA's Health & Safety policy aims to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all visitors to its Sheffield HQ building.
- As the GA is committed to safeguarding both its volunteers and children, if the volunteering role is likely to involve working with children (or vulnerable adults) the GA will carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on their behalf.
- The GA's insurance policy covers voluntary workers where they are normally resident in the UK and when they have been engaged as such with the express permission of the GA.
- Volunteers may be asked to maintain confidentiality with regard to certain GA's affairs.
- The GA endeavours to promote mutual support between both volunteers themselves and volunteers and the GA with respect to managing the demands of any volunteering roles.
- The GA will help to resolve any difficulties you may have in respect of any volunteer role for the organisation.
- Volunteers are free to offer their time for a short or as long a period of time as is appropriate.
- Volunteers can cease their activity with the GA at any time of their own choosing.

*This policy was approved by Governing Body on 7 March 2015*